be made more powerful by magical means or the ritual acts of relatives. Although these often entail great labour and expense, parents seldom neglect their duty; in fact, care for their children is one of the strongest Bella Coola characteristics, though the methods used are so foreign to the white man that he has difficulty in realizing their meaning. The hope of both parents is to have children to carry on their names; infanticide is unknown and the death of an infant is mourned almost as much as that of an adult. Sterility and impotency are frequent causes for divorce.

At the present time there is a high birth-rate in Bella Coola, although the heavy infant mortality prevents any appreciable increase in the population. In the *old days*, it is said, there were always large families, though much confidence cannot be placed in this statement. In families where there are several children, the first-born, whether boy or girl, assumes an important position. His or her influence, as eldest, is naturally considerable, and the parents foster this through the vague feeling that it is proper for the eldest to be the most important in the family. In adult years, and after marriage, the influence of the eldest of a family continues to have considerable weight with younger brothers and sisters.

If a man is poor he cannot hope to have more than one wife, and his family circle will be limited to their children, and perhaps to elderly parents. On the other hand, a wealthy and powerful man usually has a larger family. Not only may he have several wives, but his aged relatives, and those of his wife, look to him for support and assistance. Such are usually welcome to live in his house; they lend what aid they can in collecting food, and it gratifies a man's pride and sense of power to be closely surrounded by a large family. The Bella Coola are, on the whole, considerate to their aged relatives.[*]

[*] This is not true of the present. During the winter of 1922-3 a feeble old man, living alone, was often in actual want of food. Disabled and dependent, of a once [illegible] himself, none of his surviving relatives, of whom the nearest were nephews, would take him into their houses. Commenting on this man's fate, several informants pointed out how, in the old days, such a one could have found

[illegible]

[illegible]

CHAPTER VII

BIRTH, ADOLESCENCE, MARRIAGE

Birth—Childhood Instruction—Puberty Rites—Marriage

Birth

IT was impossible to obtain definite data on the fertility of Bulia Creole women, or on the period elapsing between marriage and the birth of the first child. Sterility is rare, though by no means unknown; on the other hand, there are several families with as many as eight or nine children. The changed conditions which have followed the advent of the white men seem to have had little influence on the high birth-rate, although infant mortality has increased enormously. Within the last few years this has diminished, so that the Bulia Creole are now holding their own. Children are always desired, and although methods of abortion and infanticide have been known for many years, neither practice seems to have been sufficiently common to have produced an appreciable effect on the population.

Pregnancy usually occurs during the year following marriage. Though its actual dependence upon coition is fully realized, yet the Bulia Creole, religiously minded in this as in all other aspects of life, ascribe the condition to the four *Mamoolilimat* acting on the labour of *Ngunnim*. It is believed that the Carpenters carve out the child who is to be born in the same way that a human craftsman manufactures some complicated object. Most individuals do not theorize to any extent upon the course of biological development, but are content to assume that *Ngunnim* has made the coming birth possible.

During pregnancy the expectant mother must observe certain restrictions. If she chews gum, she will have a difficult delivery; if she eats salmon tails, the hair of the infant will appear before the head, and although skilled midwives can usually extract a child, this is a painful process which usually [illegible]

1:McDwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

further conceptions by wriggling her body on her haunches immediately after the delivery of a child. 842

To the Bella Coola religious concepts of birth are as important as the physiological aspects. The blood discharged at birth, and the mother from whom it has come, is *cuxide*, a word difficult to translate. It is applied to a person or thing which is taboo, and combines the significance of "uncanny," "abhorred," "to be avoided," "feared"; perhaps "unclean," in the biblical sense, is the best synonym. Essentially human, this blood is not only potent against supernatural beings, but is dangerous to man as well. For this reason a mother must never be delivered within a house. The smell of the unclean blood might kill all resident within, or at least prevent them receiving presents of any kind. Supernatural beings and inherent supernatural powers are alike repelled by it. 826 844 789

A recent mother is taboo and must exercise due precautions to prevent her baneful influence from affecting her associates, but this power is most strongly present in one who has borne twins. Even younger people, sophisticated in most matters, shudder when speaking of twins; fortunately, double births are not common. They are attributed to the entry of a salmon into the body, so that a twin is half-salmon, half-human. Occasionally a woman who is pregnant with twins discovers her condition in a dream and avoids the perils of a multiple birth by calling upon a shaman to remove the spirit from one foetus so that the infant will be born dead and delivered. If this is not done, the two infants arrive in due course, to the horror and grief of parents and relatives. Though abhorred, no case is known of the killing of a twin at birth. 845 [825] [819] [952] [847]

Instead of the two children being brought back to the village, word is sent to the father who must join his wife in the temporary shelter in the woods where delivery took place. For one year, they must not return home, and during this period must eat no salmon. Four times during the year they must shift from one shelter to another, each built on the bank of a small creek. The mother can draw water from this stream

1:36:Haworth E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NES

the perils of infancy. During this period, the mother observes various magical taboos to ensure the welfare of her offspring, and endeavours to strengthen herself by rubbing her own body with non-odoriferous oils obtained from dog-fish, geese, or fresh chicken. Soft pounded salmon and water are added to an infant's diet as soon as possible, though nourishment from the breast frequently continues until a child is two, or even three years of age. It is not uncommon to delay weaning until the mother is again pregnant, when the child is deterred by the application of soot to the breasts. Marital relations are recommenced as soon as the mother is strong enough; there is no specified period of abstinence, nor does it matter whether or not the woman is lactative.

Occasionally, an infant is born with teeth; such an one is thought to be the reincarnation of a dead ancestor, though no one knows which. A similar belief is held respecting a child with dimples in the lobes of its ears; these are regarded as remnants of the holes pierced for ear-rings. A child that cries in the womb is said to have great intellect.

In former times infanticide was practised for various reasons. If a woman died in giving birth, it was customary for her mother to kill the child unless one of her relatives was able to suckle the motherless infant who was then given to her. It was not unknown for the mother of a large family to ask the midwife to kill the child in order to avoid an addition to her responsibilities. An unmarried girl who became pregnant often went alone to the forest, delivered herself without assistance, and killed her infant. This was considered to be the kindest act, since an illegitimate child was said to be, "Like a Dog." In some cases the prospective mother requested a friend to cause abortion by kneading the stomach and uterus, a method said to be effective and seldom fatal. How to do so is common knowledge, but to practise it is considered disgraceful, and the term *sexaul*, applied to such an one, is among the most foul of Bella Coola opprobriums. It is believed that a woman who has had several children can in some way prevent

Jacobsen-Boas-Hunt Expedition 1897-1902
NEB Bella Coola NEB

and that his mother stated that all her ancestors had done likewise.

Another instance of advice conveyed in this manner was told by a Kimsquit man who related that a number of years ago a pregnant woman had dreamed that *Alpuntsin* appeared to her and told her not to destroy what she would presently bear. In due course she was delivered, but the infant was a repulsive cripple, blind and deformed. Remembering the admonition, the mother refused to slay her child as many of her friends advised. Soon it was apparent that he was supernaturally endowed; so proud of this he repeated comments which had been made to his mother within a few minutes of his birth. As he grew older he developed shamanistic powers so that he was able to converse with the dead, the only instance known of this ability being granted from birth. He also had wonderful talent as a singer and, though he must have died about 1850, the Bella Coola still recount his skill in this respect. He would unquestionably have been killed but for his mother's warning.

Instead of imparting verbal information, dreams frequently foretell the future by means of images of events about to happen. For example, if a man dreams of owning large numbers of pelts, it signifies that he will have success in hunting, and he starts for his trap-line without delay. So, too, warnings are conveyed. A number of years ago a slave woman of *Snuk*, who was not a member of the *Snuxa* society, dreamt that she saw herself blown in many places and lying covered with blood. Within a few days she met a Cannibal dancer (II, p. 70), who was supposed to have vanished into the land above; he killed her and devoured her body, as she had seen. A Kimsquit man told of a similar instance that happened to a number of the party with which he had been hunting a number of years previously. One night he was wakened by one of his companions, *Tsilkis*, calling out that he was afraid because he had dreamt that one side of their canoe was destroyed. The hunters were impressed, because they knew he had long ob-

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anaxaxaxa, "Come and eat": Invitation to the Indians to assemble in a performer's house.

anaxi: Wooden bowls.

anaxi'ax: Wooden bowls for a potlatch.

[152] [515] [931] [515] anaxilax: Wooden.

Anaxilaxsh: 1 — Property, regarded as clothing, etc., given by the groom's relatives to the bride's relatives when the latter visit the house on the wedding day.

2 — Other presents given by the husband's relatives to the wife's relatives prior to her confinement.

[515] Anaxoqilax, "The Throwing Off of a Thong Broken from the Shoulder": Gift of the equivalent by a wife's relatives of presents received from her husband's relatives.

Anaxoxlaxs: 1 — Receiving vats.

2 — The destruction of the house of a chief who is about to give a potlatch.

Anbalalem: One of the names of the supreme god.

Anbaxaxalaxs: Distribution, by persons on the rise, to a chief to go to the meeting place.

[241] [535] Anbaxlaxs: The employment of hereditary guests.

Anbi'anx: One further on South Bentinck Arm.

Anbiqilaxsem, "The Chasing": Synonym for ahamsem, q.v.; this is a Kimsquit term only.

Anbiqut: Rivulets one to which the performer appears to be borne to death.

Anbuxlaxs: The casting of burnt wastes on the fire.

Anbuxth, "Fire from the River": Village on the upper Kimsquit River.

Anc!: Obsolete.

[947] Ancaxila, "Disappeared": word of the supernatural beings called by a wife's dancer who serves her for the potlatch.

[101] [401] Anc: Slave from the lower Fraser sound to Kimsquit during the last century.

Anc!ax: Bella Coola term for the Bella Bella.

Anc!axa!axaxaxs: Bella Bellaan or half-moon.

anch: 1 — Slave.

2 — Slave, term used by old person to dance address to whole.

3 — Husband.

[614] anchaxa: Wife relative of same consanguineal family.

anchilaxs: Woman who performs man's work.

[607] anchiqulaxs: Single brother to a family with several sisters.

[93] [524] anchiqut, anchuxlaxs: Small tree, especially one, term used to indicate children.

anchuxlaxs: "Washing Clothes": Presents given by the relatives of the future bride to the relatives of the future bridegroom on the first announcement of the engagement. The implication is that they will have to labour industriously to obtain the wealth necessary for the marriage.

[921] anchuxsmut: Last meal of the marriage, semi-ceremonial.

anchx: Bella Bella term for the ankle.

[543] anchx: Bella Coola term for the people of extinct Bella Bella-Kimsquit stock who inhabited the shores of Dean Channel.